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USS BANNER (AGER-1)  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco 96601

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AGER1:JIN:dhs  
5720  
Ser 001  
19 May 1969

OPNAV REPORT 5750-1

~~SECRET NOFORN (CONFIDENTIAL upon removal of enclosures 1 and 2)~~

From: Commanding Officer, USS BANNER (AGER-1)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington, D.C. 20390  
Subj: USS BANNER (AGER-1) History for the period September 1965 through December 1968

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5720.12A  
(b) CINCPACFLTINST 5720.2A  
(c) U.S. SEVENTHFLT Public Affair Officer ltr FF/1/TWT/jet 5720 of 5 July 1968

Encl: (1) Chronology  
(2) History of USS BANNER (AGER-1) from September 1965 through December 1968  
(3) Roster of Officers on board USS BANNER at end of each year  
(4) Biography of present Commanding Officer and picture  
(5) Change of Command brochure of 25 October 1968

1. (U) In accordance with references (a), (b), and (c) enclosures (1) through (5) are submitted.

2. (C) Prior ship's histories were regrettably brief due to the extremely sensitive nature of AGER operations. It has been concluded that a more specific and thorough treatment of the history of USS BANNER would be highly desirable. The history enclosed contains the maximum amount of specific data with the lowest possible security classification covering the period of USS BANNER duties as an intelligence collection vessel. Subsequent histories will be submitted on an annual basis in accordance with references (a), (b), and (c).

3. (U) Photographs of USS BANNER (AGER-1) will be forwarded under separate cover when completed. Ship's photographs were taken on 12 May 1969.

D. L. PFISTER

Copy to:  
CNO  
CINCPACFLT  
COMSEVENTHFLT (ATTN: PAO)  
COMSERVPAC  
COMNAVFORJAPAN

GROUP 3  
Downgraded at 12 year  
intervals: not  
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CHRONOLOGY

Sep 1965 BANNER terminated her mission as an AKI, and proceeded to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for conversion.

Oct 1965 BANNER completed her conversion and proceeded to Yokosuka, Japan, to begin her new mission as an intelligence vessel.

29Oct-28Nov 65 BANNER's first operation, CLICKBEETLE ONE

6Dec-20Dec 65 CLICKBEETLE TWO

20 Dec 1965 Christmas in Yokosuka, R & R

Jan-Feb 1966 Additional modifications at Apra Harbor, Guam.

10Mar-9Apr 66 CLICKBEETLE THREE

16Apr-16May 66 CLICKBEETLE FOUR

31May-2Jul 66 CLICKBEETLE FIVE

16 Jul-6AUG 66 CLICKBEETLE SIX

15Aug-7Sep 66 CLICKBEETLE SEVEN

27Sep-26Oct 66 CLICKBEETLE EIGHT

17 Oct 1966 ETR3 HANCOCK accidentally lost overboard at sea; not found

7Nov-11Dec 66 CLICKBEETLE NINE

Dec 1966 Christmas in Yokosuka

20 Dec 1966 Change of Command

Jan 1967 Upkeep and additional modifications at Yokosuka

3Feb-23Feb 67 CLICKBEETLE TEN

16Mar-14Apr 67 CLICKBEETLE ELEVEN

1May-13Jun 67 CLICKBEETLE TWELVE

1 Jun 1967 BANNER redesignated as AGER-1 (Formerly AKI-25)

15Jul-10Aug 67 CLICKBEETLE FOURTEEN

Enclosure (1)

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CHRONOLOGY (Continued)

17 Aug- 29 Sep 67 GLICKBEETLE FIFTEEN  
23 Oct- 15 Nov 67 GLICKBEETLE SIXTEEN  
22 Nov- 19 Dec 67 GLICKBEETLE SEVENTEEN  
Dec 1967 Christmas in Yokosuka  
3 Jan 1968 USS PUEBLO AGER-2 commenced ICHTHYIC ONE  
22 Jan 1968 USS BANNER commenced ICHTHYIC TWO  
23 Jan 1968 USS PUEBLO AGER-2 boarded and seized by North Koreans' Naval vessels; USS BANNER returns to Yokosuka, Japan.  
26 Jan 1968 Formation STAR  
Mar-Apr-May 1968 In Yokosuka, Japan, NavSta, Pier ES preparation for overhaul.  
Jun 1968 In Sea of Japan for ASW transit  
10 Aug 1968 Commenced overhaul at SRF, Yokosuka  
25 Oct 1968 Change of Command  
Aug-Sep-Oct-Nov-Dec Overhaul at SRF, Yokosuka, Japan  
10 Dec - 31 Dec 1968 Active shipboard training and Refresher Training commenced at end of year

Enclosure (1)

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HISTORY OF USS BANNER (AGER-1) FROM SEPTEMBER 1965 to DECEMBER 1968

In September 1965, BANNER terminated her mission as supply ship for the Trust Territories, and proceeded to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for conversion. A sophisticated SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE (SIGINT) operations space and an additional berthing compartment were added on top of the #2 hatch area. Number 2 hold was converted to an auxiliary engine room, storerooms, and ship's office. The conversion took only six weeks, compared to a year and a half for the follow-on conversions of USS PUEBLO and USS PALM BEACH. The Chief of Naval Operations sent the following message to BANNER, commending the ship and crew for this achievement:

"The enthusiastic response of the Commanding Officer and ship's company of BANNER to this new, unexpected and sudden requirement for shipyard work nearly five thousand miles from their home port was one of two major factors which made possible such dramatic foreshortening of the expected time requirement.... Project completion on so short a schedule would not have been possible without the fullest enthusiasm and cooperation by all concerned. The performance of the addressees in the successful accomplishment of this evolution has in all respects earned our traditional 'Well done'." (141603Z OCT 65)

Following conversion, Lieutenant Robert P. BISHOP, USN, (b) (6) remained as Commanding Officer. Two line officers, a warrant engineer, and 34 enlisted were also attached. A permanent Naval Security Group Detachment, consisting of Lieutenant (b) (6) USNR, (b) (6) and 28 enlisted also were assigned during the conversion.

BANNER's operations were the first results of the "Integrated Naval Surveillance and Intelligence Ship Program (C)", established by the Chief of Naval Operations in 1965.

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The unclassified mission assigned BANNER for Phase I operations was: USS BANNER, an unarmed U. S. Naval Auxiliary ship, conducts technical research operations in an ocean environment to support oceanographic, electromagnetic, and related research programs.

BANNER arrived in Yokosuka, Japan, on 24 October 1965 and has as yet never returned to U. S. soil. The ship was assigned to operational control of Commander U. S. Naval Forces Japan while on missions and directly under operational control of Commander SEVENTH Fleet the remainder of the time. Administrative control was assigned to Commander Service Group Three. In the middle of 1968 distributional control over enlisted personnel detailed for USS BANNER was shifted from EPDOPAC directly to the Chief of Naval Personnel (PersB-2123).

BANNER's classified mission, which also applied to subsequent operations with slight modifications, was to conduct naval surveillance and intelligence collection in international waters contiguous to the Soviet Union in support of high priority national intelligence objectives and to:

- a. Determine Soviet reaction to a small unarmed naval vessel which is overtly a naval surveillance ship deployed in Soviet Naval Operation areas.
- b. Test the effectiveness of a small ship acting singly and primarily as a naval surveillance and intelligence collection unit.
- c. Collect photographic, acoustic, hydrographic and other intelligence materials on targets of opportunity.

BANNER departed Yokosuka and commenced CLICKBEEBLE ONE on 29 October 1965, after having only five days in Yokosuka to prepare for her first operation.

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Highlights of CLICKBETLE ONE include:

- a. First BANNER confrontation with Soviet warship, T-58 class mine weeper MSF, pendant 146, on 12 November.
- b. First harassment of BANNER by Soviet KRUPNY Class DDGS, pendant 010 on 13 November. KRUPNY 010 claimed BANNER had violated Soviet territorial waters twice on 13 November. Several messages in international code were exchanged between BANNER and KRUPNY 010. Example:

010 - "From 5 to 11 PM the territorial waters of the Soviet Union were violated. What is your name? What is the port of your registry? What is the name of your captain? Signed Captain."

BANNER Reply - "Your territorial waters not violated by this ship. Name U. S. Navy Ship BANNER, Research Ship."

BANNER withdrew from the disputed area.

BANNER had in fact crossed into Soviet claimed waters approximately 11 miles from a line drawn from the mouth of the Tumen River across Peter the Great Bay to Cape Povorotny. The Soviet Union claims territorial waters 12 miles from this line. The United States does not recognize the Tumen-Cape Povorotny line.

- c. BANNER's first confrontation with a Soviet intelligence collector, Lentra Class, A61 SIGINT Trawler Pendant GS-34. BANNER and GS-34 gave each other a thorough intelligence inspection.

At the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, BANNER again penetrated the line 12 miles from the Tumen-Povorotny line on 24 November, while in company with GS-34, and was not challenged.

BANNER departed her op-area on 24 November and arrived in Yokosuka on 28 November.



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After a week of upkeep, debriefing, briefing and R & R, BANNER deployed for CLICKBATTLE TWO on 6 December. For this patrol, BANNER was utilized primarily to obtain intelligence on the Soviet reaction to the U. S. annual Tri-national ASW Sea of Japan transit. This transit usually consists of one U. S. ASW Group operating with units of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Republic of Korea Navy. Specific mission objectives for BANNER during CLICKBATTLE TWO were to conduct naval surveillance and intelligence collection in support of high priority national objectives and in particular to obtain any possible information resulting from Soviet reactions to the transit of the Sea of Japan by TG 70.4 between 10-20 December 1965, using the following guidelines:

a. Between 10-19 December, BANNER was directed by CTF 96 to remain on an arc extending 100-150 nautical miles from Vladivostok, south of parallel 42-40N, east of 131-30E and within an arc extending 175 nautical miles from Vladivostok except prior to entering or leaving the assigned area.

b. In order to exploit special targets of opportunity, BANNER was permitted to proceed to the Tumen River-Cape Povorotny Line, but no closer than one nautical mile from the Soviet claimed territorial twelve mile limit, and south of the 175 mile arc.

c. Each time BANNER deviated from her assigned area, she was directed to break EMCON and notify all concerned.

BANNER departed Yokosuka on 6 December, operated as delineated above without incident and returned to Yokosuka, arriving 20 December for a well earned Christmas Holiday.

During January and February of 1966, BANNER, having returned to her home port of Apra Harbor, Guam, underwent additional modifications and equipment installation to enhance her operational capabilities.

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Completing this additional work in early March, BANNER returned to Yokosuka for briefing for CLICKBEETLE THREE.

CLICKBEETLE THREE was to have basically the same mission requirements as CLICKBEETLE ONE, but included authority to loiter in the vicinity of Tongjosen Bay off the coast of North Korea.

BANNER departed Yokosuka on 10 March 1966 for Sasebo, Japan, to refuel and then proceed up the North Korean coast to her normal op-areas off Siberia, loitering enroute in the vicinity of Tongjosen Han Bay on 14-16 March with no incident.

Arriving off Siberia on 17 March, BANNER conducted a routine patrol until 21 March when BANNER was threatened by Soviet RIGA Class DE Pendant 252. The RIGA, at general quarters with fire control radar and two 3.9/56 inch guns pointed at BANNER, closed BANNER and directed her to depart the area. PEYTA Class PCE Pendant 376 also approached with after 3.34 inch mount and torpedo tubes trained on BANNER. However, after several international code exchanges with BANNER via flashing light, the RIGA and PCE departed without further incident.

BANNER departed her op-areas on 6 April, arriving in Yokosuka on 9 April for a week of upkeep and loading provisions and stores. BANNER's home port was officially changed to Yokosuka, Japan, effective 1 April 1966.

On 16 April BANNER departed port again to commence CLICKBEETLE operation FOUR. CLICKBEETLE FOUR was similar in mission and concept to CLICKBEETLE ONE and THREE, and was conducted entirely off the coast of Siberia with BANNER transiting via the Tsugaru Straits as in CLICKBEETLE ONE. Mission highlights included:

a. 23 April - YURKA Class MSF Pendant 385 manned guns and fire control directors and then trained guns on BANNER for several minutes.

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b. 1 May - BANNER monitored the Soviet May Day Parade in Vladivostok by means of crew's recreational television.

c. 11 May - Soviet LUZA Class AL "OKA", who had been conducting a surveillance of BANNER since 29 April, closed to 5-10 yards off BANNER's starboard bow and then executed a turn to starboard, thus swinging her stern to within 5 feet of BANNER's bow.

d. 11 May - BANNER observed complete Soviet ASW exercise at 3 miles, obtaining a great deal of valuable intelligence.

The remainder of CLICKBEETLE operation FOUR passed without additional extraordinary events and BANNER returned to Yokosuka on 16 May 1966.

By the end of CLICKBEETLE operation number FOUR, BANNER was becoming highly proficient at her task as a unique intelligence collector. The amount and quality of intelligence collected during CLICKBEETLE operations, plus the unprecedented close-up pictures and descriptions of Soviet Naval activities in their home waters caused the U. S. intelligence community to realize the value of the program.

After another brief two week respite for upkeep, BANNER went back to work for CLICKBEETLE FIVE, departing Yokosuka on 31 May.

CLICKBEETLE FIVE was similar in concept and scope to the previous operations and was conducted along the Siberian coast from Cape Belkina to Vladivostok. BANNER left Yokosuka at dusk under EMCON and transited the Tsugaru Straits during the night. During all these operations the ship steamed independently from other U. S. Naval vessels. No mail was received and radio silence maintained as practicable.

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CLICKBEETLE FIVE was a fairly routine operation until 24 June, when the Soviet AGI Anemometer collided with BANNER's port bow while harassing. This was the first recorded collision between U. S. and Soviet Navy ships and was to be remembered a year later when the USS WALKER experienced a similar incident in the Sea of Japan. BANNER was sighted and/or was escorted by the usual collection of Soviet merchants, naval auxiliaries, warships and planes. BANNER arrived in Yokosuka on 2 July, after stopping two days, 28-30 June, at the JMSDF Base at Ominato, for evasion of Typhoon Kit.

During the two week in-port period, BANNER's annual supply inspection was conducted by CIU 73.1.5.

BANNER departed on CLICKBEETLE SIX on 16 July. CLICKBEETLE SIX was an intelligence intercept mission supporting the Sea of Japan transit by ASW TC 70.4. The operation was similar to CLICKBEETLE TWO and no noteworthy events occurred, although as usual, BANNER intercepted a great quantity of intelligence. BANNER completed the operation and arrived back in Yokosuka on 6 August.

After slightly more than a week in port, BANNER departed for CLICKBEETLE SEVEN on 15 August 1966. BANNER transited the Tsugaru Straits and headed straight for the Belkin coast, then worked her way southward to Vladivostok. During this patrol another Soviet AGI was encountered, the GIDROLOG. BANNER returned to Yokosuka on 7 September and terminated CLICKBEETLE SEVEN.

Departing Yokosuka on 27 September, BANNER commenced her next assignment, CLICKBEETLE EIGHT, a routine Sea of Japan operation during

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which BANNER again came across her old friend the Khabarov Class AGI Anemometer on 9 October. The AGI attempted to coerce BANNER into departing her op-area by warning that a gunnery exercise was in progress. BANNER ignored the warning and continued her operation without further incident.

BANNER's sail order for CLICKBEETLE LIGHT directed her to conduct a normal random patrol until evidence was received that the annual Soviet Pacific Fleet fall exercises were underway. BANNER was then to attempt to intercept the exercising units. However, even though CTF 96 (COMNAVFORJAPAN's operational designation) extended BANNER's patrol by two days, it became obvious by 21 October that the exercise would not be held in the immediate future and BANNER was ordered to return home.

The crew was shocked and grieved by the loss of ETR3 (b)(6) (b)(6) USN, (b)(6) at sea on 17 October 1966 at night. LT (b)(6) (b)(6) USN, (b)(6) was appointed to conduct an investigation into (b)(6) disappearance. Considering all the known facts, testimony and evidence, it was concluded that (b)(6) accidentally fell overboard and was drowned. (CO, USS BANNER letter AKL25/WTID 5800 of 27 Oct 66 to Judge Advocate General). During the entire period of this report, no further deaths or major accidents occurred to ship's personnel.

CLICKBEETLE EIGHT terminated when BANNER arrived at Yokosuka on 26 October, after stopping at the Uminato JMSDF Base for additional fuel.

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BANNER departed Yokosuka on 7 November for CLICKBEETLE NINE, the first overt ship intelligence patrol off the coast of Communist China. This operation, conducted at the request of and as tasked by the National Security Agency marked the first time BANNER had operated outside of what were now considered to be her normal patrol areas.

Since CHICOM reaction was unknown, in order to have response ready in case of a hostile act, the Fifth Air Force in Japan and the 313th Air Division in Okinawa were alerted and COMSEVENTHFLT placed destroyers on alert in Keelung, Taiwan.

After refueling at Sasebo, Japan, BANNER arrived in her patrol area off the CHICOM coast and was promptly surrounded and harassed by eleven fishing trawlers. Fortunately, BANNER was able to escape from this encirclement without serious incident, and proceeded on her patrol. A SEVENTH Fleet destroyer was dispatched to BANNER's assistance from the Taiwan Straits, but retired a week later when it appeared that no further harassment would be forthcoming. BANNER completed the patrol without further serious incident. BANNER arrived in Yokosuka on 11 December in plenty of time for a well earned rest and the Christmas Holidays. The following MSG received from COMSEVENTHFLT epitomizes the early achievements of USS BANNER:

- "1. I view with pride the outstanding achievements and performance of the officers, crew and research department of BANNER during the first eight missions.
2. Your pioneering of a new concept in naval research operations have been conducted in a manner in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service. Well done. VADM John J. HYLAND."

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On 20 December 1966, LCDR Charles R. CLARK, USN, (b) (6), relieved LT Robert P. BISHOP as Commanding Officer, USS BANNER. BANNER then finished 1966 in Yokosuka, undergoing some equipment modifications, including installation of two new AC generators, and enjoying some long delayed R & R.

BANNER headed for Sasebo on 31 January to refuel, enroute to CLICKBLETLE TEN. While in Sasebo, BANNER was visited by RADM JANNEY, CONSERVGRU THREE, CTF 73 and BANNER's immediate administrative superior.

A special objective of CLICKBLETLE TEN was to evaluate the newly installed BRIGAND equipment. BANNER was the first surface ship to have BRIGAND. The inventor and developer, Mr. (b) (6) of VQ-1 rode BANNER for this mission. BRIGAND displays a PPI presentation on a SPA-25 repeater of the picture the target radar has acquired, by passive means. A geometrical distortion is introduced, but can be compensated for by graphs or overlays. BANNER's equipment produced excellent results and it was considered a valuable addition to the intelligence collection suit.

BANNER departed Sasebo on 4 February 1967, to commence the operation. A pass was made up the east coast of North Korea to test reaction and BRIGAND radar sites. The lack of response was disappointing, so BANNER opened out to about 40 miles from land and made a direct run toward Wonsan, stopping while in international waters to take a Nansen cast. The only reaction noted was a half-hearted attempt of a WHIFF fire control to lock on, but BANNER seemed to be outside of maximum range. Two high speed patrol boats passed at three miles, but showed

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no interest in BANNER. After moving a few miles north, BANNER conducted man overboard drills near some North Korean fishing vessels, again without arousing interest. After two days in Wonsan area, BANNER proceeded to the normal op-areas off Vladivostok.

On 7 February, an ECHO class Soviet submarine surfaced near BANNER who was lying-to taking a Nansen cast. The sub ignored BANNER and slowly opened to about four miles. Three large ships were then noted closing. The ships (later identified as KASHIN DLG-026, KRUPPNY DDGS-025, and a KILDEN DDGS ) headed directly at BANNER in a column formation, then at 4000 yards turned to close the sub. The sub submerged and BANNER observed an ASW exercise for about 2 hours, commencing at sunset.

The exercise slowly moved toward BANNER, and when the units were within 1000 yards, BANNER was challenged but didn't reply. With KRUPPNY illuminating from 200 yards on the port bow, KASHIN passed ahead and came down the starboard side at 100 yards. KASHIN stopped and commenced a high power twist, swinging the bow toward BANNER. BANNER got underway and came to starboard to stay inside KASHIN's turning circle. KRUPPNY kept easing ahead on the port bow, forcing BANNER into continuing the turn 180°. BANNER steadied, with both units astern. KRUPPNY pulled away and resumed exercising with the other units. KASHIN continued directly astern at less than 200 yards, with a large searchlight on each wing of the bridge converged on BANNER. After a short while KASHIN broke off and BANNER stopped to watch the remainder of the exercise. On completion, KRUPPNY closed BANNER and assumed escort duties.

The following morning KRUPPNY was relieved by RIGA DE-202. On 9 February 1967, RIGA signalled in international code, "You are in territorial waters, heave to or I will open fire on you." Since BANNER had just stopped



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prior to breaking the signal, she had to get underway again so as not to imply that the order was being obeyed. BANNER proceeded at minimum speed to show she was not intimidated, and turned to present a small target aspect.

Almost overshadowed by the exciting and dangerous Soviet harassment during CLICKBEETLE TEN was the first operational test of BRIGAND. As a result of testing by BANNER, much valuable information was received both about the target radars and about the capabilities of BRIGAND.

Finally, on 20 February, after an eventful and productive patrol, BANNER headed for home, arriving on 23 February.

Following a three week stay in Yokosuka, BANNER returned to the lists on 16 March to begin CLICKBEETLE ELEVEN.

This operation had none of the spectacular harassment of some of the earlier patrols, notably CLICKBEETLE TEN, but it was interesting and productive. Among other things, CLICKBEETLE ELEVEN produced first contact with two of the wierdest looking craft BANNER had yet seen. OS-6, a guided Missile Support Ship, and TNT-11, thought to be an NBC Warfare Training Ship, escorted BANNER throughout most of the patrol.

Although not harassed herself, BANNER enjoyed watching several collisions between her escorts. OS-6 especially completed CLICKBEETLE ELEVEN in somewhat worse shape than she had begun it. Finally on 11 April, having completed her mission, BANNER outdistanced slow moving OS-6 and headed for home, arriving 14 April, just in time to pick up a new executive officer.

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The next several weeks in Yokosuka were spent primarily attempting to square away the new, completely green XO/Navigator. Fortunately, the next mission was to be an easy one, another ASW group Sea of Japan exercise, and this would provide additional tune-up for the novice navigator.

BANNER departed Yokosuka for CLICKBELTLE TWELVE on 1 May, and following a beautiful, uneventful patrol in support of TG 70.4, pulled into Sasebo, Japan, on 18 May, for what was supposed to be a three day break before commencing CLICKBELTLE THIRTEEN, scheduled to be the second patrol off the CHICOM coast.

However, CLICKBELTLE THIRTEEN was not to be. Due to the tenseness of the world situation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to cancel the operation. Meanwhile, during the JCS deliberations, BANNER was enjoying three glorious weeks of spring in Southern Japan. There were, however, certain difficulties morale-wise as the crew was not able to get paid since pay records and the disbursing officer for USS BANNER were in Yokosuka. Those with wives in Yokosuka also found these three weeks of delay and uncertainty very upsetting.

On 1 June 1968, BANNER's designation was officially and finally changed to AGER-1, formerly AKL-25.

CLICKBELTLE THIRTEEN was cancelled, and BANNER ordered back to Yokosuka for replacement of her main reduction gears and other repairs. Arriving in Yokosuka on 13 June, BANNER remained in port for five more weeks completing repairs and making preparations for CLICKBELTLE FOURTEEN, which was to be a routine operation off the coast of the Soviet Union.

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CLICKBEETLE FOURTEEN saw BANNER proceeding as far north as 47° N latitude. Although, as originally envisaged, the patrol would have taken BANNER to 49°N - deep in the Tartary Gulf, this requirement was changed due to the difficulty for the Air Force to provide air support in the area. As it turned out the patrol was rather uneventful except for the period immediately following Commanding Officer, USS BANNER's message indicating that BANNER might have violated the territorial waters of the Soviet Union. This brought a flurry of concern from JCS on down, but finally blew over as BANNER completed her patrol and returned to Yokosuka on 10 August 1967.

Then USS BANNER got a message from RADM Edwin B. HOOPER, Commander Service Force which read in part "I wish to extend my personal congratulations to all those responsible for the commendable achievement of your ship." (122254Z AUG 67) This message was advance notification of what COMSERVPAC letter FF4-15 serial 331/6562 of 1 September 1967 confirmed. USS BANNER was First Runner-up out of the ten ships in her competitive group in the Service Force U. S. Pacific Fleet Battle Efficiency Competition, during fiscal year 1967. This achievement best portrays the fact that even though tasked with a heavy intelligence gathering mission, BANNER was able to continue to observe the highest naval standards and complete required naval drills and reports in an exemplary manner.

BANNER's next patrol, CLICKBEETLE FIFTEEN, which commenced on 17 August, and the two weeks of special surveillance operations following the basic patrol included some unique, although sometimes frustrating experiences in BANNER's life as an AGER. Among other firsts were:

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The first close aboard surveillance of CHICOM combatant vessels; the first use of AGER's as surveillance/chase vessels to observe Soviet Pacific Fleet Units operating out of area; BANNER's first visit to Okinawa and a wonderful, although quite hot, three weeks of sunbathing weather off the CHICOM coast.

As indicated above, CLICKBETLE FIFTEEN was the long awaited second patrol off the CHICOM coast. The patrol was conducted under NSA tasking, and while not uncovering much unique intelligence, was considered an overall success.

Perhaps the highlight of the patrol occurred on 31 August, when BANNER was circled by CHICOM SHANGHAI Class PTF's pendant G31 and G32. Although not overtly hostile, both of these craft circled BANNER several times with all guns manned, loaded and trained on BANNER. Due to the large number of apparently high-ranking personnel on both vessels, it is thought that their main purpose was to look BANNER over to attempt to determine just what she was. Their curiosity apparently satisfied, the PTF's withdrew and were not heard from again.

On 15 September, BANNER was directed by CTF 96, her operational commander, to proceed to Naha, Okinawa, terminate CLICKBETLE FIFTEEN, reprovision and prepare for special surveillance operations in the Philippine Sea. Accordingly, BANNER proceeded to Naha, arriving on 17 September. With tremendous effort by all concerned, BANNER was refueled and reprovisioned and departed Naha on 18 September.

The task facing BANNER during her special operations was formidable. Find and surveil two 30 knot plus destroyers known to be operating

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somewhere in the Philippine Sea.

The next two weeks can only be described as frustrating. With her 12 knot maximum speed, BANNER raced from one hot trail to the next, only to find her quarry gone each time. Finally, after some erudite thinking by CO, BANNER, the Soviet units were intercepted on the evening of 25 September. Remaining with the destroyers for most of the next day, as they made no move to get away, BANNER was left in the dust when the Soviets tired of the game and cranked on turns on the afternoon of the 26th. BANNER continued the futile chase until the 28th when she was ordered home by CTF 96. BANNER arrived back in Yokosuka on 29 September.

Following three weeks of much needed upkeep in Yokosuka, BANNER was up and at 'em again for CLICKBEETLE SIXTEEN on 23 October.

CLICKBEETLE SIXTEEN, conducted off the coast of the Soviet Union, was a routine operation. The two most noteworthy events of the operation were the recording of a Russian Minesweep skipper's voice on CO, BANNER's brand new tape recorder and the taking of what's probably the best picture ever taken by a surface ship of a Soviet TU-16 Badger bomber as it screamed past BANNER at about 100 feet altitude. BANNER completed the patrol without incident and arrived back in Yokosuka on 15 November.

Anxious to get at least one more operation on the books before Christmas, especially considering the imminent arrival of USS FUEBLO (AGER-2) and the supercession of the CLICKBEETLE program with ICHTHYIC, the powers that be didn't allow much napping time for BANNER, sending her on her way again on 22 November 1967 for CLICKBEETLE SEVENTEEN, the last CLICKBEETLE patrol, and as it turned out, the last complete AGER patrol for a long time.

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CLICKBEETLE SEVENTEEN, another CHICOM patrol under NSA tasking, was rather routine except for a harassing incident on 12 December by six CHICOM fishing trawlers, which produced the most detailed harassment write-up/diagrams ever seen. This harassment, not considered serious at the time, was an ill omen indeed, for on the very next AGER patrol, ICHTHYIC ONE, USS PUEBLO (AGER-2) was harassed, then siezed by North Korean Naval vessels.

Subsequent to BANNER's harassment during CLICKBEETLE SEVENTEEN, USS WILHOITE (DER-379) was dispatched from TG 72.1 to BANNER's aid, but later retired when it became obvious that further harassment would not be forthcoming. Finally, her patrol complete, BANNER cranked on homeward bound turns, arriving in Yokosuka, on 19 December, in time for Christmas and briefing of the officers and crew of the recently arrived USS PUEBLO. Awaiting on the pier were the usual friends and relatives of the crew, but also there, 25 days of holiday season mail which did wonders to boost the morale of a ship load of tired sailors.

During an RPS audit done after Christmas at the ocassion of a change of custodian, certain discrepancies were found (CO, USS BANNER ltrs serial 01 and 001 of 2 January 1968 apply). This necessitated an informal investigation by CDR [REDACTED] (b)(6), USN, [REDACTED] (b)(6) of Commander, U. S. Naval Forces Japan Staff. The RPS Custodian was found to lack knowledge of proper procedures and responsibilities of the RPS Custodian and recieved a letter of admonition from CO, USS BANNER for not properly carrying out his duties as instructed.

After spending her holidays in port, USS PUEBLO departed on ICHTHYIC ONE, a Russian/Korean patrol on 3 January and BANNER followed on 22 Jan-

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uary, for ICHTHYIC TWO, scheduled to be similar to PUEBLO's patrol.

On 23 January, upon learning of PUEBLO's capture by North Korea, BANNER returned to Yokosuka, departing again on 26 January for the Formation Star Operation show of force in the Sea of Japan.

BANNER operated in the Sea of Japan with Formation Star until 22 February, except for an eight hour return to Sasebo for fuel on 8 February. During this time BANNER merely steamed back and forth in the center of the Task Force waiting for a decision on action to be taken. With the decision made to wait and negotiate, BANNER was ordered to Sasebo, on standby and then to Yokosuka, arriving 11 March.

For most of the rest of March, April, and May, BANNER remained at pier eight south, her home in Yokosuka, preparing for her forthcoming overhaul. Not that this was an eventful period. Far from it. In addition to the many things required of a ship entering overhaul, BANNER was busy proposing major ship alterations to improve her operational effectiveness and marginal habitability conditions, conducting a short refresher training, and preparing for her third Sea of Japan ASW transit during late May and early June.

Highlights of this period include installation of two twin 20mm gun mounts, an INSURV Inspection on 13-14 March, interim refresher training by FLETRAGRU, WESTPAC, in mid-May and a brief interim operational readiness inspection on 25 May. With these hurdles successfully passed, BANNER was ready to sail for the Sea of Japan.

Thus on 30 May, BANNER got underway for her first real job in three months. The trip was merely a support mission for the yearly Sea of

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Japan transit by a CVS group, and BANNER's role was quite limited. Still, at least BANNER was at work.

As in her previous two Sea of Japan transits, BANNER was assigned the role of SIGINT Early Warning Ship for the Carrier Task Group. This mission entailed remaining between the Task Group and Communist territory as the task group proceeded south from the La Perouse Straits to Sasebo, Japan. In the past, this had been merely a rather dull, routine assignment, requiring no special preparations or concern. Now, however, in the PUEBLO aftermath, the operation was, in the opinion of higher authority, neither routine nor unimportant. As the first AGER patrol since the PUEBLO seizure, this trip was looked upon as somewhat of a milestone. Elaborate and unprecedented precautions were taken to ensure BANNER's safety and more important the safety of the classified papers and equipment aboard. These precautions included, but were not limited to: Removing all classified matter not absolutely required for the mission; training of BANNER personnel in the Emergency Destruction of the remaining material, stationing of a combatant ship to rush to BANNER's rescue if required, frequent communication checks between BANNER and the Task Group Commander, and requiring BANNER to remain further than 80 miles from Communist territory at all times.

Thus, the trip was quite safe and proceeded without incident as the task group proceeded south to Sasebo. BANNER followed the Task Group into Sasebo for the post exercise critique, remained an extra two days for crew rest and recreation, and then returned to Yokosuka arriving on 14 June.

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After a relatively brief two weeks in port, BANNER was sent out on what was to be her last trip for a long time on 2 July. She was assigned to what can only be described as a "different" type of mission. The mission as stated in the sailorder was "... to determine the purpose and nature of the unusual operations of Soviet ATR's GIOROGRAF and MB-16 in the area south of the Japanese island of Honshu in the Northern Philippine Sea".

After some searching BANNER located MB-16 near Aoga Shima in the Northern Philippine Sea and began surveillance. After one day on station, with nothing having been learned of MB-16's purpose, two situations developed which precipitated BANNER's return to Yokosuka.

First, beginning on 5 July, the seas began building to the point where BANNER had trouble maneuvering safely. These safety considerations based on marginal stability reduced maneuverability to the point of steaming dead into the sea (south) or downsea (north) by early morning on 6 July. Since BANNER's ship's service boiler (her only source of steam, went out of commission late on 5 July, and in view of the increasingly dangerous sea conditions, BANNER aborted the mission and returned to Yokosuka, arriving in the early morning of 7 July.

With her overhaul scheduled to begin on 10 August, BANNER plunged into final preparations. In addition to the normal pre-overhaul routine of conferences, work requests and job planning, BANNER was hoping to accomplish many major items not normally accomplished during a routine overhaul. These additions and modifications would involve changes as

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major as those accomplished during BANNER's 1965 conversion, and in some ways was even more radical.

So BANNER began to settle into the frenetic, but still in some ways routine life of overhaul. Major changes in shipboard life included messing at shore based facilities and berthing in barracks spaces while the ship was uninhabitable. Although the overhaul was originally scheduled to last from 10 August to 10 October, it was recognized early in the overhaul that because of the vast modifications being accomplished, and delay of shipment of critical equipage, the overhaul period would have to be extended two months until 10 December.

Thus when BANNER's new commanding officer reported aboard in October, instead of finding a freshly overhauled, ready to operate ship, he discovered a ship ripped out from stem to stern. BANNER's change of command originally scheduled for after completion of overhaul therefore actually took place on board BANNER during a momentary lull in the noise of the chipping hammers and overhaul machinery, with the ship brightly decorated with signal flags and pennants.

On 25 October, 1963, CLR C. A. CLARK, USN, was relieved as Commanding Officer by LCDR Donald L. FOSTER, SUN, (b) (6).

The overhaul was officially completed on 10 December and was considered to be a highly successful one during which BANNER received numerous habitability and mission oriented improvements which, of necessity, had been ignored during the 1965 conversion.

The period between 10-31 December was devoted to crew training in preparation for refresher training. Also during this time, represen-

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tatives of Naval Weapons Center, China Lake installed a remotely controlled scuttling system. This system, which employs three shaped charges, is designed to sink the ship in 3-5 minutes.

December 31, 1968 found HANNER berthed in Yokosuka, Japan, awaiting RFT and the eventual resumption of AGER operations.

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CONCLUSION/SUMMARY. After reading the chronology and narrative of US HANNER's history from September 1965 through December 1968, it is very easy to become impressed with the successful accomplishment of HANNER's primary mission. However even on intelligence operations, it must also be remembered that above everything else, the ship has the sea and natural elements to contend with. Storms, swells, strong winds, ice, fog and shallow waters were threats which HANNER must meet and overcome. These enemies have made run-ins with the communist fleet less exciting and seem only minor in comparison with the everyday natural challenges to safety and navigation.

Space and time unfortunately do not permit the complete details as to exactly how each day was spent and on whom each success could be attributed. Overall, every man did his duty in a professional manner. The high morale of the crew is no doubt most attributable to the fact that everyone works together and gets to know everyone personally because of the small crew. Fights and personnel fruds have been almost nil, which is surprising since the ship's allowance is twice as large as for what the ship's original design called for and all shipboard facilities are still overcrowded.

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No one yet knows what the future has in store for BANNER or what new orders the higher-ups may send. The only thing known for sure is that BANNER in December 1968 is a much better ship than it ever has been. She's a little older; perhaps not as structurally sound as she used to be in her prime; but the ship has new equipment, new weapons, new destruction procedures, and even a new crew from those who sailed her on the first 18 successful BANNER missions. Intensive training and thorough indoctrination have made the difference and will bring BANNER safely through any challenge the future may bring.

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